

The Diocese of Great Falls

P.O. Box 1399
Great Falls, Montana
59403

July 31, 1978

Dear Father,

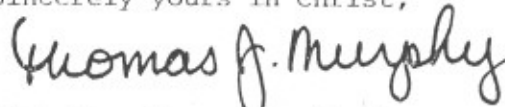
On August 21, 1978, Montana will become my home. On that day, it will be my privilege to begin a life of ministry and service to the Diocese of Great Falls. I will join each of you in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God among the people of Eastern Montana. Together, we will announce the Word of God, celebrate the Eucharist, and continue to gather the people into a Christian community.

As the new Bishop of the Diocese, I know full well that the work of the Lord cannot be achieved, or even begun, without the involvement and cooperation of the People of God, and especially the priests and religious of the Diocese. I am especially eager to know, to pray with, to work with, and to share my responsibilities with my brother priests of the Diocese of Great Falls. Immediately after the ordination and installation ceremonies, I plan to visit each of the Deaneries and to invite you together for a time of prayer, a time of listening, a time of sharing, and finally a time for concelebrating the Eucharist together with the People of God in the area. This initial coming together will hopefully be followed by more such gatherings on an individual and group basis. I would like to know each of you as a friend and brother, and for each of you to know me in the same way.

Our first coming together as Bishop and priest in the Diocese will occur at the celebration of Eucharist on August 21st. I hope that you will be able to concelebrate that Eucharist with me. I believe it is only right that we should first meet at the table of the Lord where the blessing and the breaking of the simple elements of bread and wine reflect the strength and brokenness of all our lives. These same elements break all barriers and become the presence of the Lord. It is that presence of the Lord that will bring joy and hope to our own lives, the life of our people, the life of our parishes and institutions, the life of the Church of Great Falls.

As I wait and prepare for our coming together on August 21st, may I ask for your prayers that I might be a good Bishop, a man of prayer, who realizes more than ever before that my life must be one of service. Be assured of my own prayers for each of you. May our joint prayers for one another achieve joy and hope in Christ.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Thomas J. Murphy
Bishop Elect of Great Falls